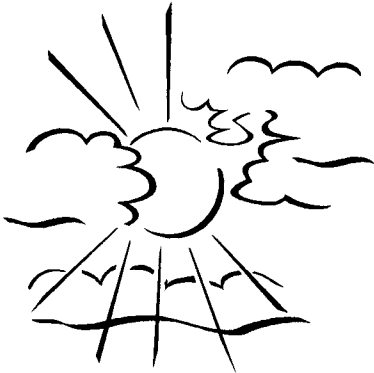


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*Important story at this spot

Articles in Today's Clips

Thursday, October 13, 2005

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

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Nation faces budget-busting bills

Marquette Mining Journal

October 13, 2005

WASHINGTON (AP) - Winter heating bills will be a third to a half higher for most families across the country, with the sharpest increases expected for those who heat with natural gas, the Energy Department forecast Wednesday.

The department said natural gas users can expect to pay an average of \$350 more during the upcoming winter compared to last year, an increase of 48 percent. Those who heat their homes with fuel oil will pay \$378 more, or 32 percent higher than last winter.

Propane users can expect a percentage jump in their bills similar to those of fuel oil users.

In its winter fuels outlooks report, DOE's Energy Information Administration assumed a normal winter and steady progress in restoring oil and natural gas production and refinery output from the damage inflicted by hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

"Should colder weather prevail, expenditures will be significantly higher," the EIA said.

The agency as well as the natural gas industry said that heating costs could vary widely among regions.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration offered a bit of cheer Wednesday morning, issuing a long-range winter forecast calling for warmer than normal temperatures in much of the Midwest and Pacific Northwest.

NOAA's National Weather Service said there is a 60 percent chance of warmer than normal weather in the Dakotas, Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, north Texas, northern New Mexico and southern and eastern Colorado. States adjoining that area, plus Washington, Oregon, Alaska and Hawaii also have a chance of being warmer than usual. Other areas could be warmer or cooler than usual but no area was singled out to be especially cold.

A month ago, the EIA said natural gas prices could jump as much as 71 percent in the Midwest, where four of every five homes are heated by gas. It made no such specific assessment this time, but acknowledged that a colder-than-normal winter in the Midwest would produce significantly higher costs.

The cost of fuel accounts for about 70 percent of the price utilities charge retail residential customers, according to the American Gas Association.

EIA said it expects continued recovery of the energy system in the Gulf region in the coming months. But it said it expects a third of the Gulf's crude oil and a fifth of its natural gas to remain shut-in into December.

It also projected wholesale natural gas prices staying at about \$12 per thousand cubic feet through the winter heavy demand period, twice what it cost last winter.

For some low-income families the sharp jumps could mean choosing whether to eat or keep warm, energy experts and advocacy groups fear.

The natural gas utilities warned Tuesday that despite their attempts to contain retail fuel costs, heating bills for gas users this winter will jump 50 percent over last season nationwide. In parts of the Midwest bills could be much higher.

More than half of all U.S. households heat with natural gas. But many of those who rely on electric heat, nearly a third of the country, may also see bills go up because many power plants run on natural gas. And users of fuel oil, more than half the households in New England, are

expected to see their costs jump by a third or more over last winter, according to industry and government estimates.

"We have never had prices so high and increase so quickly," said Mark Wolfe, executive director of the National Energy Assistance Directors Association, which represents the state agencies that distribute money to help low-income families pay their fuel bills.

This winter, Wolfe expects more than a million additional applicants for the government program, a 20 percent increase over last year, with not enough money to go around. Congress provided \$2.2 billion for the program, known as LIHEAP, last year.

More heat from Congress

Grand Rapids Press Editorial

Thursday, October 13, 2005

Projected record-breaking increases in heating costs this winter will put some seniors and families at risk. Like the hurricanes, the nation has been warned. Congress, at least, should react. For the Senate, that means reconsidering a recent decision to not authorize an increase in a federal energy assistance program. The issue cannot be written off until next year.

The 25-year-old Low Income Heating Assistance Program (LIHEAP) sends money to the states to help people who earn at or less than 150 percent of the federal poverty level and who are unable to bear the expense of utility costs. The state then doles out the money to cities and counties. A bipartisan group of senators including Michigan's Carl Levin, D-Detroit and Debbie Stabenow, D-Lansing, is seeking an increase in LIHEAP from \$2 billion nationally to \$5 billion. Governors, including Michigan's Gov. Jennifer Granholm, are apart of the effort.

The request is reasonable given the forecasts of higher prices this winter for natural gas and home heating oil and the fact that funding for the program has not been increased this decade. Fuel prices were on the rise before Hurricanes Katrina and Rita disrupted oil and gas production. The legislation could still be attached to a supplemental spending bill for Katrina recovery.

The Department of Energy projects that home heating prices will average 47.5 percent more this winter, the largest increase in 30 years. Obviously, colder areas more reliant on heating oil and natural gas, like Michigan, will be hit the hardest. In Michigan, 80 percent of households are heated with natural gas. Natural gas could cost an average of about \$1,200 this winter, up from \$1,000 last year.

Michigan's current annual LIHEAP allotment is approximately \$117 million and serves nearly 1 million residents. Other groups such as The Heat and Warmth Fund (THAW), a statewide non-profit emergency energy assistance program, also assists struggling families that may be ineligible for LIHEAP. The group gave more than \$268,000 to 533 families last year in Kent, Ottawa and Muskegon counties.

For most of us, colder weather means the inconvenience of a higher bill. Others, fortunate enough to have locked in low budget rates with gas companies, may escape any cost pressure. But for others, the bigger bills this winter will mean making tough choices between what bills to pay.

People attempting to reduce heating expenses and stay warm will turn to space heaters, kerosene, or ovens. These methods can be dangerous. The National Fire Protection Association reports that heating accidents are the leading cause of fires during the winter. No one should have to hold Congress' feet to the fire-- although a little heat would be appropriate -- to persuade it to support this legislation.

Published October 13, 2005

Winter deals: State needs to act on gas costs

A Lansing State Journal editorial

Gov. Jennifer Granholm has warned state utilities that she'll be closely watching heating bills this winter to make sure all costs are "reasonable and appropriate."

Under existing regulation, that's not as much succor to consumers as you might think.

And that's why Granholm and lawmakers should be looking at additional, temporary regulation to deal with soaring natural-gas costs this winter.

In an official statement, Granholm noted that existing regulation limits utilities to profits on the delivery of gas, not on the price of natural gas itself. Those regulations also put the state Public Service Commission in charge of setting delivery rates.

But as the PSC reported Tuesday, the problem for residents this fall isn't soaring delivery rates, but soaring costs for natural gas. The new estimate is that the average home heating bill will rise 46 percent in the state.

It could be worse. Thanks to Michigan's gas storage capacity, price increases here will be less than in other Midwest states. But it will still be big - even with Granholm watching.

Can state officials really stand aside and watch consumers struggle?

People aren't going to stop heating their homes. They will shift money from other spending to their utility bills. And that means less spending on the Michigan economy - the struggling economy.

Is that a better situation than the state working with utilities for a one-year cap on what they can charge for natural gas, to reduce the impact on consumers this winter?

We don't think so.

Oct 13, 2:27 AM EDT

States Aim to Protect Poor From Heat Bills

By CONNIE MABIN
Associated Press Writer

CLEVELAND (AP) -- With fuel bills expected to rise sharply this winter, states are setting aside extra money for the poor, dispensing energy-conservation tips and pleading for federal aid to help Americans keep the heat on when the weather turns cold.

Ohio freed up an additional \$75 million for heating assistance for the needy, and Wisconsin added \$16 million. Iowa officials set up a Web site to give people advice on how to save energy and get aid, but they acknowledged that may not be enough.

People "can only turn the thermostat so low before it affects your health and well-being," said Jerry McKim, chief of Iowa's Bureau of Energy Assistance, which helps poor families pay their utility bills. "This is a life-or-death matter. I have serious anxiety about what folks will face this winter."

On Wednesday, the Energy Department predicted winter heating bills will be a third to a half higher than last year for most families across the country - an average of \$350 more for natural gas users and \$378 more for fuel oil users.

The rising prices are blamed largely on Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, which damaged oil and natural gas installations and disrupted production.

More than half of all U.S. households heat with natural gas. Nearly a third of the country relies on electric heat, but those homeowners may see their bills go up too, because many power plants run on natural gas.

Every winter, heating assistance helps people like Willa Meriweather, a retired graphic artist from Cleveland. Before a state-funded nonprofit group helped her install insulation in the attic of her 85-year-old home, fix its leaky roof and seal old windows, her gas bills soared out of her reach: as high as \$473 a month.

"I got one of those big, old houses with a teen suite and I couldn't use it in the wintertime. Now I can use it," said Meriweather, 60. "I'm slightly worried about this winter, but thank God I don't think my bills will be as high as it was before."

This winter could see many more applicants for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program with not enough money to go around. Congress provided \$2.2 billion for the program last year, but this year President Bush has proposed cutting it to about \$2 billion.

Twenty-nine governors have asked Washington for \$1.3 billion more for emergency energy assistance. There has been no immediate action from Congress on the request.

"This program is critical to the elderly, disabled and children of this state," Iowa Gov. Tom Vilsack said.

Some states have found additional money to spend on heating assistance within their budgets. Wisconsin has more than doubled funding to \$16 million for a program that weatherproofs homes and businesses and helps the poor pay their bills.

Ohio Gov. Bob Taft last week ordered \$75 million added to the state's \$100 million heating aid program. And the income limits will be raised so that more families can receive money to pay their heating bills.

Meriweather, whose multiple sclerosis keeps her in the house most days, said she would like to pack up her motorized scooter and go to Washington to help the governors get more federal aid. "There are going to be a whole lot of people without heat this winter. You're going to find a lot of people frozen to death," she said. "Maybe when somebody dies, that's when they'll do something. Oh, Lord."

On the Net:

Ohio Department of Development: <http://www.odod.state.oh.us/cdd/ocs/heap.htm>

Iowa energy saving information: <http://www.state.ia.us/government/com/util/SaveEnergy.html>

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Thursday, October 13, 2005

Vigil puts focus on domestic violence Nonprofit will hold the candlelight event Tuesday in Howell to raise awareness.

By Jon Zemke / Special to The Detroit News

HOWELL -- Ardif Lelito breaks down into tears when she talks about her daughter.

After she gathers herself up, the Fowlerville resident's voice still quivers when she describes how the murder of her daughter by a boyfriend affected her family.

"It just destroys your family, let me tell you," Lelito said, choking back tears. "I'm not making out my daughter to be a saint, but she was a good person. She didn't deserve that."

Lelito will be one of several speakers at LACASA's annual vigil against domestic violence Tuesday evening in downtown Howell.

"All I can do is tell these women to leave," Lelito said. "If they have the power to do it, just leave."

That's something Lelito wishes she could have told her daughter.

Helen Lelito was shot to death by her boyfriend inside her Fowlerville home in August of 2002. She had just turned 30 and had four children.

LACASA is a local nonprofit agency dedicated to domestic violence prevention and helping victims of domestic violence.

Nicole Matthews-Creech, the director of community education for LACASA, said 67 percent of all prosecuted assaults in Livingston County are related to domestic violence. She added that the rate of domestic violence in Livingston County is just as high as it is in counties like Wayne or Washtenaw.

Tuesday's candlelight vigil will be the 10th LACASA has held to raise awareness about domestic violence in Livingston County.

Hundreds of people attend the event each year.

It will feature speakers, such as Lelito and Livingston County Prosecutor David Morse. There will also be reading of the names of the 47 people who have died because of domestic violence in Michigan this year.

Penny Murphy uses words like "profound" when describing the event she has attended for the last four years. The bookkeeper from Howell Township said the vigil helps people realize the seriousness of domestic violence.

"It's pretty intense," Murphy, 41, said. "It's hard to believe that people lose their life over an argument with a loved one. It can happen so quickly."

If you go

LACASA will hold a candlelight vigil at 7 p.m. Tuesday on the lawn of the Historic Livingston County Courthouse in downtown Howell. The vigil will help raise awareness about domestic violence and what can be done to stop it. For information, call (517) 548-1350.

Jon Zemke is a Metro Detroit freelance writer.

Thursday, October 13, 2005

Police track domestic violence offenders Sheriff, 24 other agencies crack down on 140 violators in 1-day effort to coincide with awareness month.

By Mike Martindale / The Detroit News

ROCHESTER HILLS -- Deputies from the Oakland County Sheriff's Office and officers from 24 police agencies fanned out across the county Wednesday in an effort to track down domestic violence offenders at home or work.

The officers sought 140 local offenders who were named in arrest warrants, failed to appear in court or violated terms of their probation sentence.

The number of arrests and charges were to be released today.

The crackdown was timed to happen during Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Gordon R. Deo of Orion Township and Richard D. Hilborn of Rochester Hills were located Wednesday morning and taken into custody for arraignments.

Both went before Rochester Hills 52-3rd District Court Magistrate Melinda Balian. Deo was arraigned on two warrants for failing to appear on a probation violation for domestic violence.

Hilborn was charged with failing to appear on a domestic violence charge. They could face up to 93 days in jail for the offenses.

The one-day sweep is part of a national effort coordinated by Oregon's Clackamas County Sheriff Craig Roberts.

It is designed to send a strong message to the public that domestic violence will not be tolerated.

"These are individuals who have committed an assaultive crime and have not presented themselves in court as required," Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard said.

"They're ignoring orders to appear, and often, those type of people also commit other acts of violence."

Bouchard served on the board of the Oakland County domestic violence shelter HAVEN (Help Avoid Violent Encounters Now) for several years. He also has been appointed to the national advisory board on the Violence against Women Act.

Roberts, while a detective, set up the Oregon program in 2001. He was elected the county's sheriff in January and has encouraged others to participate in the one-day effort that last year spanned 15 states and involved 650 arrests.

The Oakland County Prosecutor's Office prosecuted 387 domestic violence felonies in 2004 and 569 domestic violence misdemeanors.

Beth Morrison, CEO and executive director of HAVEN, said domestic violence statistics are "very conservative" because it is one of the most underreported crimes in society, and many crimes are processed as city ordinance violations.

"We're supportive of this and any effort which holds batterers accountable," Morrison said.

The one-day effort has had success nationally, with an average of 17 percent of targeted offenders being arrested by officers during the one-day sweep. Oakland County, which participated in the program for the first time last year, arrested 11 of 53 sought offenders.

You can reach Mike Martindale at (248) 647-7226 or mmartindale@detnews.com

OASIS keeps Domestic Awareness Month in mind

By Mardi Suhs, Cadillac News

October 13, 2005

CADILLAC - Three people were murdered within a nine-month period in Wexford County as a result of domestic violence. A suicide tagged onto one of those murders brought that death count to four.

Domestic Violence Awareness Month, recognized every October, is a time when communities throughout the nation unite to raise public awareness about violence in the home.

For the staff members of the Cadillac OASIS/FRC, this time of mourning is personal.

The three local murders impacted the staff and helped create a new Danger Assessment workshop to help community members recognize "the risk of lethality."

The first murder occurred near Mesick on Aug. 18, 2003 when Edmund Herndon shot and killed his wife Ruth.

Herndon admitted in court that he had a temper. Defense Attorney Burton Hines said that Herndon's wife had called him "stupid."

Three months later Clifton Moffat stabbed Jay Thiebaut Jr. to death. Court testimony revealed he (Moffat) was upset by the relationship Thiebaut Jr. had with his estranged wife.

Six months after that murder, Amy Hutton, a Forest View Elementary teacher, was shot and killed by her husband who then took his own life with a handgun.

Stephanee Barnes, OASIS legal advocate, said that these events took a toll on their staff.

"The first murder," she remembered, "wasn't well-publicized. Then the Thiebaut murder was very public. This guy (Moffat) planned to come up here. He stalked and did what he did."

But the last murder, the Amy Hutton case, was "the straw that broke the camel's back" for Barnes.

She was angry.

"People knew what was going on," she said. "There were lots of people trying to keep her safe."

However, many times, she added, people just don't think it will happen - so they don't stand up and speak out.

After Hutton's murder, Barnes conferred with Roman Grucz, the Friend of the Court, for a course of action.

"We need the community to be aware," she said. "Speak up. You cannot let one incident slide. If you see an incident that you believe has something to do with domestic violence, do not let it go."

Barnes and Crucz put together a five-hour workshop to train people in danger assessment and risk of lethality. There are 19 risk factors listed in the form of questions for women to ask themselves. Research has shown that women who score an eight or higher are at very high risk of lethality. The average score for women murdered was just under eight. Even scoring a four or higher shows great risk.

This year OASIS/FRC is committed to giving speaking presentations every day for the month of October. Staff members will speak for 10 to 45 minutes to raise awareness and help create a community that will work together for zero tolerance for domestic violence.

"We need the community to be aware," Barnes stressed. "Speak up and become active. The bottom line is that we are trying to save lives."

For information on the OASIS/Family Resource Center or to book a speaker, call 775-7299. For emergencies, call 775-7233.

Month of awareness

WHAT: National Domestic Violence Awareness Month to help end this deadly crime.

PURPOSE: To mourn those who have died as a result of abuse, to celebrate those who have survived and to raise public awareness about violence.

EVENTS: Sponsored by OASIS/FRC, activities include:

€ Purple Ribbon Campaign

€ Personal Protection Order Legal Free Clinic, Oct. 28, 10 to 11:30 a.m.

€ Landlord/Tenant Issues Legal Free Clinic, Oct. 28, 1 to 2:30 p.m.

€ Child Custody Issues Legal Free Clinic, Oct. 28, 2:45 to 4:14 p.m.

€ Clothes Line Project Art Therapy

€ Helping Hands Project with elementary children

€ Silent Witness Program

€ Public Speaking throughout community.

INFORMATION: Call 775-7299

news@cadillacnews.com | 775-NEWS (6397)

Man accused of domestic assault

Petoskey News Review

Wednesday, October 12, 2005 2:26 PM EDT

An Emmet County man is facing a felony criminal charge following a domestic dispute in Carp Lake Township late Monday.

Toby Cameron, 40, of Levering, was arraigned today, Wednesday, in Emmet County's 90th District Court on a charge of assault with intent to do great bodily harm less than murder.

According to Emmet County Sheriff Pete Wallin, deputies from his office were dispatched to a report of a domestic assault in Carp Lake Township at about 11:54 p.m.

When they arrived at the scene, deputies met with a 31-year-old woman who said she had been assaulted by Cameron. Police said Cameron had left the scene prior to the deputies' arrival.

Wallin said deputies issued a "be on the lookout" advisory to area police departments for Cameron because of possible injuries he may have sustained during the assault and the large amount of blood found at the scene. Police also notified local hospital emergency rooms in case the suspect showed up for treatment.

The victim was examined by medical personnel at the scene and refused treatment. On Tuesday, the Emmet County prosecutor's office authorized the charge against Cameron, who deputies arrested without incident at about 12:30 p.m. Tuesday.

Cameron remained lodged at the Emmet County Jail in lieu of a \$30,000 cash or surety bond following his arraignment today.

The Emmet County Sheriff's office was assisted by troopers from the Michigan State Police Petoskey Post and Mackinaw City Ambulance.

Michigan Report

October 13, 2005

SENATE APPROVES CHANGE IN CHILD PROTECTION BILL

A change to the state's Children's Protection Registry Act, that would require persons to get authority by an adult before sending a child an otherwise prohibited email, won unanimous Senate approval on Wednesday.

Under recently enacted law, a Child Protection Registry allows parents to register their children (schools may also register) as a contact point with the Department of Labor and Economic Growth and once registered individuals or companies cannot send emails or other messages to that child if it involves an item the child would not be permitted to view or purchase.

However, under SB 785 if the sender gets permission first from the responsible adult – and that adult's age has been verified – then an otherwise prohibited email could be sent.

Man Sentenced In Shooting Of 7-Year-Old Girl

Acosta To Spend Up To 10 Years In Prison

POSTED: 5:49 pm EDT October 12, 2005

A man was sentenced Wednesday in the shooting of a 7-year-old girl.

Alex Acosta was sentenced to up to 10 years in prison for assault and weapon charges, Local 4 reported.

The shooting occurred in April while Margareta Gallardo-Tena was eating dinner with her family inside her home on Cadet Street, Local 4 reported.

Shots were fired at the home and a bullet struck the child in the head, according to police.

Margareta was taken to a local hospital in serious condition, but survived the incident.

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Search for missing 2-year-old ends on happy note

SHIAWASSEE TOWNSHIP

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION
Thursday, October 13, 2005

By Marjory Raymer
mraymer@flintjournal.com • 810.766.6325

SHIAWASSEE TWP. - A 2-year-old boy who wandered away from home was found safe after about four hours.

Jacob Powell was playing outside his home on Scribner Road before disappearing about 6:30 p.m. Tuesday.

The Shiawassee County Sheriff's Department began searching for the boy and called for help from several fire departments, the state Department of Natural Resources and state police. Floodlights were set up to illuminate fields, and other agencies volunteered four-wheelers and eventually two helicopters.

A state police helicopter from Lansing equipped with an infrared light that can detect heat located the boy about 100 yards northwest of the house in corn that was 6-8 feet tall.

"They found him just sitting there," said Lt. Mike TerMeer of the Shiawassee County Sheriff's Department.

He was hungry and his hands were cold, but otherwise Jacob seemed unfazed by his adventure - except reporting to rescuers that he had "seen a lot of deer," TerMeer said.

Jacob told his mother he could hear her calling him, but he couldn't see her so he stayed put.

More than 100 volunteers from local agencies and neighbors offered to help.

"Everybody in Shiawassee County came together and it turned out good," TerMeer said.

Police find boy unharmed after four-hour search

By DREW ACRE Argus-Press Staff Writer

Wednesday, October 12, 2005 10:38 AM EDT

SHIAWASSEE TOWNSHIP - A 2-year-old Shiawassee Township boy - missing for nearly four hours Tuesday night - was found alive and well by police in a corn field about 100 yards northwest of his home following an extensive search.

The search for Jacob Powell began at approximately 6:30 p.m. after his parents reported him missing from their back yard, according to Sgt. Mike Gute of the Shiawassee County Sheriff Department.

Police believe Jacob wandered into a 500-acre corn field during a game of hide-and-seek.

Eighteen emergency agencies were involved in the search effort, along with a multitude of local volunteers. The search continued until about 10:30 p.m. and encompassed a 12-mile radius around the home, Gute said.

Powell was found by the Michigan State Police Aviation Unit, which used an infrared radar unit mounted in a helicopter. The helicopter radar detected the boy's body heat in the field, Gute said.

Two officers and a firefighter were sent to retrieve Powell, who was tired and hungry but otherwise OK, Gute said.

"The coordination between the many agencies and volunteers involved was incredible - everyone did a fantastic job," said Gute. "This is a story that has a happy ending."

Assisting the sheriff department in the search effort were the MSP aviation unit, Shiawassee County Central Dispatch, Sheriff's Posse, Shiawassee County Emergency Management, Morrice Police Department, Perry Police Department, Durand Police Department, University of Michigan Survival Flight, Michigan Department of Natural Resources conservation officers, Flint Township Canine Unit, Shiawassee Township Fire Department, Corunna-Caledonia Fire Department, Perry Fire Rescue, Vernon Township Fire Department, Owosso Township Fire Department, American Red Cross and Corunna Area Ambulance Service.

Two charges dropped in Hunter case

The Exponent

October 11, 2005

By Matt Schepeler

Jackson County Prosecutors have dropped two charges against former Columbia Township Police Chief Mark Hunter because they do not have jurisdiction.

A heroin possession and child pornography charge were dropped after prosecutors realized that Hunter did not live within one mile of Jackson County .

"We had to drop them," Chief Assistant Prosecutor Mark Blumer said Monday morning. "We had no control over it."

Blumer said it was erroneously assumed because Hunter had a Brooklyn address that he lived close to the Jackson County line. The law allows prosecutions up to a mile in neighboring counties, but Hunter actually lives about two miles into Lenawee County . The child pornography and possession of heroin charges were brought against Hunter after police raided his home. They were added to charges of illegal eavesdropping, embezzlement by a public official, misconduct in office and illegal use of a computer, all which they allege occurred in Jackson County .

Hunter resigned in April after being accused with charges of sexual harassment by a female police officer. That incident appears to have sparked the investigation that led to charges that Hunter illegally videotaped himself having sexual relations in his office and that he sold township guns and kept the money.

Blumer said that the heroin and child pornography charges will be referred to the Lenawee County prosecutor, but that Jackson officials were still prosecuting Hunter for the other charges. "We have the evidence," said Blumer. He said they would be willing to allow Hunter to plea to "a reasonable agreement with our office," but it would require "an admission of corruption as a police chief, or we're going to trial."

If convicted, Hunter is facing up to ten years in prison.

Evidence seized by the Michigan State Police includes 20 guns and dozens of VCR and 8 mm video tapes.

However, according to a list of evidence obtained from the Michigan State Police by The Brooklyn Exponent, no child pornography was listed as being seized from the Hunter home.

The list of evidence contains a variety of commercial and non-commercial pornography, tapes officials say depicts Hunter having sex in his office with an unnamed woman, as well as pornographic images and clips from a computer.

Also listed are apparent surveillance tapes from hidden cameras, Polaroid snapshots, photo albums and VHS tapes taken from a pinhole camera in a carry bag.

The list also includes heroin as well as two bags of dried mushrooms. Officials say it was never determined if the mushrooms were hallucinogenic, and Hunter was never charged for possessing them.

Lenawee County Prosecuting Attorney Irving Shaw said Monday that they would review the case upon receipt.

Arraignment will be scheduled in Jackson County Circuit Court for the remaining charges.

Teen charged in fatal shooting

Thursday, October 13, 2005

THE SAGINAW NEWS

ST. LOUIS -- Raymond L. Kittle Jr., 17, of St. Louis has agreed to appear at an arraignment stemming from a Sept. 25 shooting that left a teen dead.

Kittle will appear at 11 a.m. Tuesday in Gratiot County District Court in Ithaca to answer to charges in the death of Brent C. Beechler, 16, of St. Louis.

Prosecutors charged Kittle with manslaughter, a 15-year felony, and discharging a firearm causing death, a two-year misdemeanor, says St. Louis Police Lt. Craig Evans

Lansing State Journal

October 13, 2005

Teen gets 6-15 years for sex assault

Lansing teen Jamal Sanders was sentenced Wednesday to 6 to 15 years in prison for sexually assaulting an Eastern High School girl last year.

Sanders, 18, pleaded guilty in August to third-degree criminal sexual conduct for assaulting a female student in October 2004. The crime is punishable by up to 15 years in prison.

Sanders, who gets credit for 358 days served in the Ingham County Jail, also was ordered to undergo mental health treatment while in prison, said his attorney, Mike Nichols. "He did what I thought was a commendable job of accepting responsibility and asking for help," Nichols said of Sanders.

Accused bus bully charged with assault, hate

Thursday, October 13, 2005

By Nate Reens
The Grand Rapids Press

GREENVILLE -- Hunter Ambrose blamed the bruises on his arms and legs to battles on the football field, leading his mother to wonder why the 11-year-old's pads did not protect him. Turns out the hits were punches inflicted on the school bus, allegedly by a high school student bent on battering the Greenville seventh-grader because of his race, the Montcalm County prosecutor said.

Only when the two weeks of beatings left him with a knot on his head and bruises up and down his body did Hunter fess up, telling his mother a teenager was picking on him and calling him racial slurs.

"I couldn't believe it," said Hunter's mother, Kathy Ambrose. "This is an 11-year-old kid getting picked on by a high-schooler. I don't understand what possesses a kid that much older to do something like this.

Prosecutor Andrea Krause said she charged a 16-year-old Greenville High School student with ethnic intimidation and three counts of misdemeanor assault for the beatings that allegedly occurred between Sept. 12 and Sept. 23.

Krause did not release the student's name because he was charged as a juvenile.

"Basically, it's a classic case of bullying, and we're not going to tolerate it," Krause said. "He chose this child because he was smaller and of a different race."

Kathy and Paul Ambrose, who live in Gowen, adopted Hunter, who is biracial, when he was 4 months old.

"The sad thing about this is that he's lost his innocence at such a young age -- it's been taken from him," Kathy Ambrose said. "Before this, he was taught not to notice or judge, or expect to be judged, by his skin color."

Hunter's alleged attacker is white.

The Ambroses took the assault claims to the Greenville school board this week, hoping members would draft a policy on how to punish a student who beats others.

The suspected bully has been removed from the bus he rides but not punished otherwise by the district pending an investigation, administrators said.

Since the middle school and high school are on the same campus, Hunter's mother fears her son still could be targeted by the older student.

"You can take the race out of this and it's still a problem when a 16-year-old is beating an 11-year-old," Ambrose said.

School Board President Janet Ralph said she would expect disciplinary action against the 16-year-old, if the allegations are proven.

Superintendent Terance Lunger would not comment on potential disciplinary action while the district investigates.

But he said every student has the right to attend school and ride the bus without the fear of intimidation or being physically assaulted.

"Racism is a manifestation of ignorance," he said. "A school's job is eliminating ignorance. We'll make this a teachable moment for us all."

Kids shouldn't be locked up forever

Thursday, October 13, 2005

They're too young to vote, too young to drink legally. But they're not too young to be sentenced to life in prison without parole.

Michigan ranks third in the number of state prisoners serving life terms with no chance at parole for crimes they committed as juveniles -- usually murder. Only Pennsylvania and Louisiana have more under lock and key.

During the tough-on-crime 1980s, Legislatures around the nation were cranking out mandatory minimum sentencing, truth in sentencing and three-strikes laws designed to keep more people behind bars longer.

Michigan was no exception, establishing mandatory sentences for certain crimes and giving judges and prosecutors no discretion over them.

Eight states -- Alaska, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, New Mexico, New York and West Virginia -- do not allow juveniles to be sentenced to life without parole.

Only three other nations besides the United States -- South Africa, Tanzania and Israel -- allow the practice.

The encouraging ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court in March that banned the execution of juvenile offenders on the grounds that they are "categorically less culpable" than adult offenders should be extended to life sentences as well.

We agree with the court that juveniles are categorically less culpable. Their immature brains cause them to take more risks. They do not perceive consequences for their behavior and they see themselves as indestructible. All of these factors can lead to crimes that never would have occurred if these kids had been a few years older -- and a few years wiser.

Liz Boyd, Gov. Jennifer Granholm's spokeswoman, said recently that she would be open to the idea of changing Michigan's law, although "we're not open to giving people a get-out-of-jail-free card."

We agree. Juveniles who commit murder need to be punished. And, yes, they should spend time behind bars.

But, at some point, they also should be allowed to go before a parole board.

Thursday, October 13, 2005

Battle Creek Enquirer

EDITORIAL

Juvenile offenders must be locked up, but forever?

Americans are well aware of the horrific crimes committed by some adolescents. We have read of children as young as 11 or 12 years committing cold-blooded murder with no signs of remorse. Despite their age, we as a society have become increasingly intolerant of such behavior. That is why the U.S. rate of juvenile offenders being sentenced to life in prison with no possibility of parole has tripled in the past 15 years.

Some such offenders undoubtedly need to be separated from civil society for the remainder of their lives. But is it fair to take away any prospect of parole for children who might eventually be able to turn their lives around?

Having completed the first study of its kind into jailing youth for life in adult prisons, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International are urging the U.S. government to abandon the practice. The two groups point out that the United States has at least 2,225 juvenile offenders serving life sentences without parole. The total for the rest of the world is 12 such offenders. Michigan, along with Virginia and Louisiana, are the most aggressive states in handing out life sentences to juveniles, according to the study.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child prohibits sentencing young people to life without parole. Only the United States and Somalia have failed to ratify the treaty.

We understand that there is little difference between a 16-year-old and an 18-year-old who kill someone, although one is considered a minor by the courts while the other is an adult. That is why we agree that under certain circumstances, juveniles should be tried as adults.

But we also believe that such cases, when they result in a conviction, deserve individual review. A life sentence with no possibility for parole takes away any chance that an offender, no matter how misguided or confused as a teen, can ever have an opportunity for freedom. We think that is wrong, and that youthful offenders should have at least a glimmer of hope that they can become a responsible adult. That does not necessarily mean that they should be paroled, but they should at least have some incentive to become a better person, even if it is behind bars.

The U.S. Supreme Court earlier this year banned the execution of juvenile offenders, finding that juveniles are "categorically less culpable" than adults. Many people consider a life sentence without any possibility of parole to be even harsher than a death penalty.

By outlawing life sentences without parole for juveniles, we would at least hold out some hope to young people who have made heinous mistakes early in their lives that they can have a future.

Published October 13, 2005

Annual food drive a reminder of local needs

26 area groups help in two-week effort to restock pantries

By Stacey Range
Lansing State Journal

Local schools, community groups and businesses are doing their part to help stock cupboard shelves of needy families this holiday season.

About 26 area groups are participating in a two-week food drive that will culminate Oct. 22 with a community collection in Frandor Shopping Center.

The ninth annual food drive, a joint effort of the Capital Area United Way and the American Red Cross Food Distribution Center, is part of the national Make A Difference Day. Organizers hope the effort brings in more than the 28,159 pounds collected last year.

"People have been so focused on hurricane relief efforts lately, so we hope they don't forget about local needs," said Amanda Byrnes, community impact associate for the Capital Area United Way.

Groups participating in the drive this year include 19 area schools, Michigan State University, Payless ShoeSource, Capitol Pharmacy, Delta Township Library, Educational Child Care Center, and Greater Lansing Youth for Christ.

Kristen Mason, a kindergarten teacher at Tutor Time in Okemos, is using the drive as an opportunity to teach her nine students about the spirit of giving.

The 4-and-a-half and 5-year-olds this week set eight boxes around the child care center for parents, teachers and staff to fill with canned goods and nonperishables. They also put their handprints on posters asking readers to "Lend a Hand."

"It's a good way for them to learn to share and help others," Mason said. "They really are grasping that other boys and girls don't have as much as they have."

The drive is especially important this year because pantries have struggled to keep their shelves stocked, Byrnes said. The continued economic slump, local layoffs and rise in the number of people seeking assistance has strained some agencies.

Food donations have picked up a bit recently, said Kathe DeMara Smith, operations supervisor for the mid-Michigan Chapter of the American Red Cross. She thinks that's because disasters such as Hurricane Katrina and the earthquake that struck Pakistan, Afghanistan and India made local residents think about the needy of Greater Lansing.

"It was kind of a wake-up call that there are needs in our community as well," DeMara Smith said. "People started looking at the needs of their own community and thinking about what they could do here."

Donations are particularly needed now, she said, as agencies already are starting to put together Thanksgiving food baskets.

Food collected through the drive will go to the Red Cross Food Distribution Center, which acts as a clearinghouse for community kitchens, shelters and pantries in a seven-state region. The center distributed 6.5 million pounds of food last year.

Food drive

The Capital Area United Way and American Red Cross Food Distribution Center will host a community food drive Oct. 22.

- When: 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Where: Frandor Shopping Center. An American Red Cross truck will be parked in front of Kroger.
- What to give: Bring any canned or nonperishable food item. No glass.
- For more information: Call 337-8211.

Contact Stacey Range at 377-1157 or srange@lsj.com.

Food drive draws crowds

Thursday, October 13, 2005

By Michael Buck
The Grand Rapids Press

WYOMING -- A record crowd at a monthly food giveaway sponsored by the Godwin Heights school district testifies to the need in the area, organizers say.

Residents on Monday lined up in the fieldhouse parking lot outside the Second Harvest mobile food pantry to receive food.

"This is the longest the line has ever been," district librarian Ruth Jackson said of the 231 families that received food.

The program started two years ago when students in the district's Academic Enrichment program decided to focus on local hunger. Most months, it distributes food to 200 families, organizers say.

"There was a need a few years ago because of Steelcase downsizing, and we saw how successful (the project) was and continued it," said project coordinator Deb Conklin, enrichment coordinator at Godwin Heights Middle School.

Other clubs in the district also pitch in to sponsor the food pantry and have kept the truck coming monthly for the past two years, except for November and December, when churches and charities fulfill the need.

Students are a large part of the volunteer force that distributes the food. Some help every month and have grown attached to the program.

"I really enjoy it a lot -- more than I thought," senior Kha Nguyen said. "I first looked at it as a requirement but, then, I started to really enjoy it."

Michigan Report

October 13, 2005

MICHIGAN HEALTH PLANS PRAISED

Eleven Michigan-based health plans ranked among the top 60 for clinical care and customer satisfaction, according to a survey by the National Committee for Quality Assurance and U.S. News & World Report released Wednesday.

“These rankings clearly illustrate that we are committed to ensuring that health plans across the state continue to provide high quality health care services for our most vulnerable citizens,” said Governor Jennifer Granholm of the announcement.

The plans were among the 16 the state uses to provide Medicaid services.

Agency prepares seniors to shop for coverage

Thursday, October 13, 2005

se@kalamazoogazette.com 388-8554

The nation's Medicare chief swung through Kalamazoo on Wednesday on a countrywide bus tour to bring awareness of the agency's first major change in its 40-year history and what that will mean for Medicare recipients.

Dr. Mark B. McClellan, head of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services in Washington, D.C., spoke at the Kalamazoo County Human Services Department about Medicare's new prescription-drug plan, which provides prescription-drug insurance for all Medicare recipients who choose the coverage.

The plan is available for everyone currently receiving Medicare.

The new prescription-drug plan could affect an estimated 42 million Americans, about 33,000 of whom live in Michigan, he said.

While the cost of the plan has been estimated to be around \$700 billion nationally over the next decade, McClellan told about 70 people gathered at the Human Services Department. The Medicare program as a whole has been estimated to cost \$5 trillion.

"Prescription drugs are an important part of modern medicine, but they're not the main cost of the Medicare program," he said. "What we've seen up until now in Medicare, we've been spending \$300 billion a year. ... Most of the money is going to pay for the complications of diseases that we know how to prevent."

McClellan said at least 20 prescription-drug insurers available to Michigan residents could have them paying premiums as low as \$13 a month for the coverage. He said the average participant should see a drug-cost savings of 50 percent.

Extra help also is available to senior households that find it difficult to afford premiums and co-pays. Several times Wednesday, he suggested that anyone with questions fill out a four-page, 16-question Application for Help form.

"When in doubt, fill it out," he said.

People can enroll between Nov. 15 and May 15, 2006; those who enroll after May 15 risk a 1 percent increase in costs each month that they do not enroll. Participants have the chance to next re-enroll in participating plans in November 2006, he said.

"Because there are a range of options available, the best thing for most people to do is start by thinking about what they want in the coverage in the Medicare drug benefit, in terms of cost, coverage and convenience," McClellan said. "With that information, we can find the one or two plans that are a very good fit for people based upon what is that they want. And that's the way this should work."

McClellan answered questions about the household income requirements of Medicare recipients living with their working children; cold calls over the telephone from would-be prescription-drug providers; and excluded categories of drugs.

He noted that the government has provided coverage in 2006 for erectile-dysfunction drugs but might discontinue that in 2007; coverage has not been offered for those in the benzodiazepine family, which includes Valium.

McClellan noted that people who get telephone calls from would-be prescription-drug providers must remember that they shouldn't feel rushed to select a plan. People can also opt out of receiving the blind calls by contacting the Federal Trade Commission's "do not call" list.

The gathering included health-care professionals such as Sally Swanson, of the Kalamazoo Association of Retired School Personnel, and Margaret Patton, a community-relations specialist at Borgess Medical Center.

Swanson noted that one problem facing several people is whether to opt for the prescription-drug coverage offered by their former employers or opt for that offered by Medicare. Employers will be required to provide written documentation to former employees that allows recipients to compare Medicare coverage with the employers' coverage.

"I would think for the people who need medicines, this will be a good thing," Patton said after listening to McClellan. "But I perceive some complications down the road" as the need and cost for prescription drugs grows.

People with questions are encouraged to visit the agency's Web site at www.medicare.gov or to call (800) MEDICARE.

Help selecting a prescription-drug-insurance provider is also available from the Medicare Medicaid Assistance Program -- known as MMAP -- which can be reached at (800) 803-7174 or www.mymmap.org.

The Kalamazoo County Advocates for Senior Issues will play host to a seminar from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Tuesday on the same topic -- "Untangling the Web of Medicare Prescription Benefits 2006." The session will be held at the Helen Coover Center, at Senior Services, Inc., 918 Jasper St., in Kalamazoo. For more information, call 373-5173.

Philadelphia moves to end homelessness

10/13/2005, 8:39 a.m. ET

The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — City officials announced a 10-year plan to eradicate homelessness in Philadelphia after meeting with advocates and others trying to best tackle the problem.

Mayor John F. Street said \$10 million in city, state and federal funds have already been earmarked for the plan. However, he said that it was unclear where additional funding will come from in subsequent years, and how much will be needed beyond the initial amount identified.

"The political will is here," Robert Hess, a city deputy managing director, said Wednesday. "Can we be the first American city to end homelessness? Yes, we can."

Street estimated that about 400 people currently are homeless in downtown Philadelphia. That is up from recent years, though still fewer than half the number from 1998, Street said.

The \$10 million is in addition to the \$64 million annual budget of Philadelphia's emergency services office and \$30 million annually in other funds for counseling and medical care to the homeless.

The plan came together as officials talked with 300 people citywide, including advocates for the homeless, about how to best tackle the problem, Hess said.

Lansing State Journal

October 13, 2005

Start local, work out

In September, Congressman Joe Schwarz said to us taxpayers that we, as Americans, have a moral and ethical duty to rebuild New Orleans and the Gulf Coast.

I made some calls, but all I got was a recording - push 13 for this, 10 for that.

My call was about the homeless in this state. We seem to keep shelling money out for George W. Bush's witch hunt, and then Hurricanes Katrina and Rita hit. My check was at the Red Cross two days before the Federal Emergency Management Agency showed up. I don't need a politician to tell me what to do.

Many homeless veterans and others go without food, clothes and medical help.

As Congressman Schwarz says, we have a moral and ethical duty - but I say in this state first!

How many vets will leave Bush's war and end up homeless on the streets this time?

Gail Zeigler
Charlotte

Carrot Way meets a pressing need

Low-cost housing an example for the community

Ann Arbor News

Thursday, October 13, 2005

More than three years in the making, 30 new units of low-cost housing are opening in north-central Ann Arbor.

The Carrot Way units on Dhu Varren Road, owned and operated by the nonprofit Avalon Housing, don't signal a new wave of affordable housing about to transform Ann Arbor. Market forces continue to drive up property values both downtown and in outlying areas. And where some proposals for low-cost housing have been aired, some in the neighborhoods where they'd be located have opposed them.

Low-cost housing developments could lower property values, invite crime and add too much traffic, opponents have said. And indeed, some in the vicinity of Carrot Way argued just that. But the support of the project by other neighbors and community leaders now has the units opening to some low-income-qualified tenants. The units rent for \$235 to \$375 a month.

Since Avalon pitched the idea for Carrot Way, on land that belonged to Food Gatherers, demand for affordable housing has only grown. When it made its intentions known on Carrot Way in 2002, some 300 people were applying for space in more than 100 Avalon-run units spread throughout the city.

Avalon today notes it has received 600 applications alone for space in Carrot Way.

Housing units like Carrot Way help make the city more diverse and inclusive, goals repeatedly expressed by Ann Arbor's residents. We applaud its rising.

Employment agency shows off new facility, slates job fair

Thursday, October 13, 2005

By Greg Chandler
The Grand Rapids Press

HOLLAND TOWNSHIP -- When Khalilah Banks moved from Tennessee to Holland a little more than a year ago, she was able to find a job with the help of the local Michigan Works office.

Now, after being laid off last month from Hart & Cooley Inc., the 27-year-old mother of three is looking for work again, and enlisting the assistance of Michigan Works in her search. She plans to earn her GED certificate and has set a goal of finding a job in the medical field, possibly pharmacy.

"I really want to get out of the warehouse scene," Banks said.

Banks has much good to say enough about the people at the Michigan Works office, saying they have been supportive and encouraging in her job search.

"You can ask them any question you want," she said. "They make sure you get to the resources that you need (to help you) overcome your barriers."

People like Banks now have a new, expanded service center to come to aid in their employment search. The Ottawa County branch of Michigan Works is in a building formerly occupied by Huntington Banks, at 121 Clover Ave., between Eighth Street and Chicago Drive, in Holland. Michigan Works will have an open house Monday to unveil the facility to the public, followed by its fall job fair Tuesday and Wednesday.

The new facility provides a "one-stop shop" for job seekers and others seeking to upgrade their job skills. It brings together a number of functions that had previously been spread out over several locations, said Erin Kauth, program supervisor for Michigan Works. "People don't have to go anywhere else," she said.

While Michigan Works had its office in the Cedar Village Mall, off of Waverly Road and Chicago Drive, other functions were located elsewhere. For example, the Work First program for people receiving public assistance from the state was based out of Kandu Industries' facility on Lincoln Avenue, Kauth said.

The new facility has more computer terminals than the Chicago Drive facility, as well as much more classroom space and interview rooms. "We can offer more workshops (at) more times," Kauth said.

In addition to using the computer-aided job searches, those looking for employment have an opportunity to meet individually with career counselors to guide them in their search. Counselors may have applicants take an assessment, such as ONET (Occupational Network), to help provide direction in the process, Kauth said.

Ottawa County is leasing two floors of the Clover Avenue building from Huntington, with a portion of the second floor being shared with other organizations such as Michigan Rehabilitation Services, which provides job training for people with disabilities.

People who may want to attend the job fair Tuesday and Wednesday are encouraged to visit the office from 1 to 2 p.m. Friday to prepare for the fair. Michigan Works will provide tips on resumes, how to dress for an interview and other related matters, Kauth said.

October 13, 2005

TC woman charged with welfare fraud

FROM STAFF REPORTS

TRAVERSE CITY - An arrest warrant was issued for a Traverse City woman accused of wrongly collecting nearly \$1,000 in welfare benefits.

Christina Esparza, 27, is charged with one felony count of welfare fraud for allegedly collecting \$908 in food assistance although she was working and not entitled to it, according to a complaint in 86th District Court.

The complaint, filed by an agent of the state's Family Independence Agency, alleged Esparza collected the assistance between April and November 2002.

Esparza became employed during that time, which made her ineligible for assistance, according to the complaint.

If convicted, Esparza could face up to four years in prison and \$2,000 in fines.

Workers' Skills Grants Announced

Today, Gov. Jennifer **GRANHOLM** announced skill grants totaling more than \$1.1 million. The grants will benefit a total of 3,191 employees, 2,778 current and 413 new hires at 53 Michigan companies.

“Michigan's collective talent of high-skilled workers is allowing our manufacturers to remain competitive in today's economy, grow and add new employees,” Granholm said. “This funding will ensure that the best workers in the world are found right here in our state.”

The grants, which are sent to local educational institutions and providers, are from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) as part of the Manufacturing Competitiveness Program (MCP).

Included on the list are:

- 131 workers in Huron and Tuscola counties.
- 476 current workers and 50 new hires at three companies in Howell and Livonia through Schoolcraft College.
- 911 current workers and 81 new hires at 14 companies in Lenawee County through the Lenawee Chamber Foundation.
- 114 new hires at four companies in Chesterfield Twp., Fraser, Shelby Twp. and Warren.
- 476 current workers and 97 new hires at 14 companies in Macomb, Oakland and Wayne counties through Henry Ford Community College.

The MCP is designed to enhance the skills of Michigan's manufacturing workforce and encourage collaboration between regional employers. It aims to streamline the training process by serving several companies through a single grant to make the best use of state funding.

Migrant program hits spotlight

Thursday, October 13, 2005

By Gary Morrison
The Grand Rapids Press

SPARTA -- A DVD about the Sparta school district's migrant education program could have cost thousands. But with the help of students from Kendall College of Art and Design, the district received the professionally made DVD for free.

Students in Kendall's multimedia class took on the DVD project at the start of the semester, Kendall teacher Terry VandenAkker said. The class is run like a multimedia company in that it takes on a project from beginning to end.

"We worked with Nancy Smith, the district's migrant education director, and her staff," VandenAkker said. "We conducted three video shoots including one at a migrant camp, another in high and middle school classrooms and the third interviewing migrant staff members and students."

Students started with a storyboard with rough sketches about what they wanted to do. They designed a logo, received concept approval from the client, filmed and edited footage and will deliver a final product in about two weeks.

"I generally find the clients for the class, but we do not take work away from the multimedia community," said VandenAkker.

"We usually work with groups that have very little money such as nonprofits or schools," he said. "This type of work would normally cost about \$10,000."

The DVD will be used to educate the district's staff and public about the migrant program.

"This replaces a video that is about 10 years old," Smith said. "A lot has changed in our program and this DVD completely updates what has taken place."

The DVD also shows the importance of migrant workers to the community, said Mike O'Connor, the district's director of grants and auxiliary programs.

Students will finish the project in 12 weeks, Vanden Akker said.

"It will be exactly like a movie DVD in that you can view it completely or go to menus and select different segments to view," he said.

Shelter helps women gain independence

Wednesday, October 12, 2005 2:17 PM EDT

Lighthouse Inn banquet speakers note shrinking grant revenues for helping young mothers.

By Erik Gable

Daily Telegram News Editor

ADRIAN - Jessica Porter thought she had her life in order, but by the time she moved into the Lighthouse Inn in Adrian, it was spiraling out of control.

"I was sleeping on a broken couch in a two-bedroom house where seven people were staying," Porter, 22, told the community members assembled at the Christian shelter's annual banquet Tuesday night.

Overwhelmed by stress and piling up mountains of debt, she was unable to be the kind of mother she knew her daughter, Liberty, deserved.

"The depression and stress took over and I couldn't trust my own judgment," she said.

When she found the Lighthouse Inn, Porter said, she wasn't sure how well she'd fit in with the shelter's rules and structured lifestyle.

But the environment turned out to be "wonderfully controlled," Porter said, a place devoid of negative influences where she could make new friends and learn new skills.

"The goal of this house is to teach women how to gain independence while following the word of God," Porter said.

Porter has been living at the Lighthouse Inn, a large Victorian house on Division Street, since August. The Lighthouse is designed for young women who are pregnant or raising young children and need a place to stay while they learn the skills they need to cope with life.

Garry Ostrander, a member of the Lighthouse board, said the Lighthouse Inn can house up to five women and up to 11 children at a time. Women between the ages of 18 and 30 are eligible to stay at the Lighthouse if they are pregnant or have up to two children who are 8 or younger.

Residents stay for a maximum of one year.

"When you have big-time problems, you can't turn around in 30 days," said the Rev. Greg Burdine, another speaker at Tuesday's banquet.

Burdine said it costs about \$300 per day to operate the program.

Ostrander said 37 percent of the shelter's revenue comes from grants, 36 percent from church donations, 17 percent from individual contributions and 10 percent from fees paid by the residents. For the program to be viable in the long run, Ostrander said, it needs to become less dependent on grants. The proportion of the Lighthouse Inn's funding that comes from grants is already decreasing - from 68 percent in 2003 to slightly more than half that today.

The program does not accept any government funding. Burdine said the Lighthouse Inn is "strictly and totally Christian," with residents attending church and Monday night Bible study.

Burdine said the shelter needs both monetary donations and volunteer help to keep running.

The main speaker for the night, former state legislator Tim Walberg, said the Lighthouse program provides "a safe environment, hope for the future, encouragement and guidance toward a healthier lifestyle."

Lansing State Journal

October 13, 2005

Judge didn't stop partner benefits

An Ingham County judge on Wednesday denied the state attorney general's request to temporarily halt a ruling that allows public-sector employers to provide health insurance to the partners of gay employees.

Republican Attorney General Mike Cox had asked Circuit Judge Joyce Draganchuk to stop the state and city of Kalamazoo from offering domestic partner benefits until the issue can be decided by the appellate courts. Draganchuk declined.

She ruled last month that public universities and governments can provide such benefits without violating a same-sex marriage ban approved by voters last year. Cox is appealing that ruling.

Democratic Gov. Jennifer Granholm wants the state Civil Service Commission to approve domestic partner benefits for state employees. The benefits had been included in new labor contracts, but

Thursday, October 13, 2005

Good deeds: Celebrating unsung heroes

Roeper senior aids Katrina's evacuees She sets up photo exhibit, which will offer her works for sale. All proceeds will go to the needy.

By Christine Snyder / Special to The Detroit News

BIRMINGHAM -- When Ali Dietz hears about tragedies in the news, it usually takes a few days for the full impact to register, the 18-year-old senior at The Roeper School says. But that wasn't so when she heard about Hurricane Katrina.

Dietz says she was struck by the potential magnitude of the natural disaster while watching TV news reports the day before the hurricane hit.

"I remember thinking that these people they were interviewing were not going to survive through tomorrow," she said. "It's not like a war that you can protest and we have opinions (about) and there are things leading up to it. There is no control over it. Imagine you're living in your community and doing what you do every day, and then one day it all gets wiped out."

Dietz decided to do what she could to help the survivors of Hurricane Katrina. She has been studying photography since middle school and participates in an independent study program with a photography teacher outside Roeper. She decided to use her art to aid the cause.

Dietz will hold a photography exhibit from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Monday at Lawrence Technology University's UTLC Gallery. All of the proceeds raised through a silent auction will go to the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

The exhibit will include about 80 prints of Dietz's work.

"About 30 will be (from) travel and 50 will be my art," Dietz said of the portraits available for purchase.

The travel photos are from her trips to Thailand -- where she taught English last summer -- and a family trip to Papua New Guinea.

"My mom has a great sense of adventure, and I've been fortunate to have parents who like to have me with them on their trips," she said.

Dietz's portraits are of people close to her.

"There are fine arts photographers who are more minimalistic, and they work in the studio and do a lot of nudes, focusing on the beauty of the body. Mine encompasses more of the people, so it's important what surrounding they are in and where I put them," Dietz said. "When I plan out a shoot, it's very involved."

Dietz said she hopes to attend the Art Institute of Chicago after graduation.

"I haven't applied yet but I've gone and visited ... and they have accepted my portfolio," she said.

"I want to go to college and figure out how to incorporate photography into my life." Lori Zinser, director of admissions and marketing at Roeper, said the project is all Dietz's doing.

"She has a very good heart and she's a phenomenal photographer," Zinser said. "She did this whole project on her own."

The exhibit is open to the public. Hors d'oeuvres will be served.

"I'm thrilled to have as many people as can come," Dietz said. "There's no pressure to buy any pictures if anyone just wants to come and support and maybe give a donation."

Christine Snyder is a Metro Detroit freelance writer.

Oprah takes on Detroit's poverty

Talk-show host features stories of two local families that have endured tough times in the city.

By Adam Graham / The Detroit News
October 13, 2005

Oprah Winfrey exposed "America's dirty little secret" -- poverty -- on her show Wednesday, and in doing so, turned a harsh light on Detroit.

The show referred to Detroit as America's poorest big city, where one in three people live beneath the poverty line. CNN's Anderson Cooper filed a report from the city in which he interviewed people living in freeway underpasses and spotlighted two local families and their struggles with poverty and homelessness.

One of the women featured, Alexandria Steele, said before the show aired she was nervous because "the whole world" was going to see her story, which she referred to as "humiliating" as opposed to inspirational.

But afterward, she said it was "breathtaking" to see how many people were living the same way she was. "I'm glad the story got out, because it's not just a private matter, it's a public matter," she said.

Steele lived with her three children in a 1989 Dodge Caravan on Belle Isle for the majority of summer 2004. But after a stay at Mom's Place, a homeless shelter for single women and their children on 15th Street in Detroit, Steele was able to get back on her feet. On Aug. 19, she moved into a home on Detroit's east side, and she is currently studying to be a pharmacy technician.

Candace Williams, housing coordinator for the Salvation Army in southeastern Michigan, helped Steele find shelter. Steele's story stood out to Williams, who recommended her to Oprah's producers.

CNN's Cooper taped the segments with Steele on Oct. 1. Detroit was one of a handful of U.S. cities featured in the episode.

Williams hopes the show will shed light on poverty nationwide.

"We need to make people aware we have people right here in our back yard, in our community, human beings, just like me and you, who need our help," Williams said. "We need to help them get up, and I'm hoping people hear that message."

Oprah should help spread that message, Williams said.

"That's huge," she said of Oprah's involvement. "It's gigantic. I know how powerful she is, and I'm excited. I'm hopeful. Just because she's taken an interest, I think things will change, even here in our city."

After the show aired in Chicago on Wednesday morning, calls of support started pouring in to Detroit's Cass Community Social Services, which operates Mom's Place.

Wednesday's show also featured a segment on Steve and Luwana Douglas of Detroit. Steve sells his blood twice a week to be able to afford gas money to drive his three children to school. When the show taped, the Douglas family was living at Detroit's Doorstep Shelter.

The Rev. Faith Fowler, who runs Cass Community Social Services, said she was thrilled the show was able to spotlight Steele, who's come through Mom's Place and found success.

"(Steele) has had a dramatic reversal of events and circumstances, so we're delighted to feature not only someone who's struggled with poverty and homelessness, but someone who's been able, through the system here in Detroit, to have a fresh start," she said. "Clearly, the exposure on 'Oprah' will only make things better for her."

At the close of the show, Cooper said he was moved by the Douglasses' story, especially that of their daughter, Marteea, who said that she prays every night that God will help her family.

To help bring the show's subject a little closer to home, Winfrey read a statistic at the end of the show that said at any given time, most Americans are only two paychecks away from being on the street.

You can reach Adam Graham at (313) 222-2284 or agraham@detnews.com.



People at Mom's Place, a homeless shelter in Detroit, watch Oprah Winfrey's show on Wednesday. The show discussed poverty in America and included stories about a few former shelter residents.

BOB HERBERT

Bush's Pledge? The Joke's on the Poor

A Page 1 article in The Times on Tuesday carried the following headline: "Liberal Hopes Ebb in Post-Storm Poverty Debate."

I might have started laughing if the subject weren't so serious. Who in their right mind — liberal, moderate, Rotarian, contrarian — could have possibly thought that George W. Bush and his G.O.P. Wild Bunch (Dick Cheney, Karl Rove, Tom DeLay et al.) had suddenly seen the light ("Eureka! We've been wrong!") and become serious about engaging the problem of poverty in America?

The article noted that some liberal activists had hoped that the extraordinary suffering caused by Hurricane Katrina might lead to a genuine effort by the administration and Congress to address such important poverty-related matters as health care, housing, employment and race.

After all, the president himself had gone on national television from the French Quarter of the stricken city of New Orleans and promised "bold action."

"As all of us saw on television," said Mr. Bush, "there is also some deep, persistent poverty in this region as well. That poverty has roots in a history of racial discrimination, which cut off generations from the opportunity of America. We have a duty to confront this poverty with bold action. So let us restore all that we have cherished from yesterday,

and let us rise above the legacy of inequality."

I assumed that most people watching the president realized that he was deeply embedded in a Karl Rove moment. The speech was a carefully scripted, meticulously staged performance designed primarily to halt the widespread criticism of Mr. Bush's failure to respond more quickly to the tragedy.

As the president spoke, it never occurred to me that anyone would buy into the notion that Mr. Bush and his supporters would actually do something about poverty and racism. Someone who believed that could

It's all about politics, not the people.

probably be persuaded to make a bid on eBay to buy the Brooklyn Bridge.

Mr. Bush is the standard-bearer par excellence of his party's efforts to redistribute the bounty of the U.S. from the bottom up, not the other way around. This is no longer a matter of dispute. Mr. Bush may not be the greatest commander in chief. And he may not be adept at side-stepping the land mines of language. ("I promise you I will listen to what has been said here, even though I wasn't here.") But if there's one thing the president has been good at, it has been funneling money to the rich. The suffering wrought by Katrina hasn't changed that at all.

One of the first things the president did in the aftermath of Katrina was to poke his finger in the eyes of struggling workers by suspending the requirements of the Davis-Bacon Act in the storm-ravaged areas.

Passed during the Great Depression, the law requires contractors on federally funded construction projects to pay at least the prevailing wage in the region.

This is one more way of taking money from the working poor and handing it to the wealthy. A construction laborer in New Orleans who would ordinarily be paid about \$9 an hour, the prevailing wage in the city, can now be paid less. So much for the president's commitment to fighting poverty.

Poverty has steadily increased under President Bush, even as breathtaking riches (think tax cuts, cronyism, war profiteering, you name it) have been heaped upon those who were already wealthy. Class divisions are hardening, and economic inequality continues to increase dramatically.

Mr. Bush's political posturing (his speeches, his endless trips to the Gulf Coast) is not meant to serve as a beacon of hope for the downtrodden. It is a message to middle-class voters, who have become increasingly disturbed by the president's policies and were appalled by the fact that he seemed unmoved by the terrible suffering that followed Hurricane Katrina.

The man who campaigned as a compassionate conservative and then turned the federal government into a compassion-free zone is all but handing out press releases that say, "I care."

He cares all right. About his poll ratings. In the end, much of the money to help lower-income victims of the recent storms will most likely be siphoned from existing, badly needed and already underfunded programs to help the poor and near-poor.

A real effort to fight poverty and combat discrimination? From this regime? You must be joking. □